

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR KREISKY AGAIN ATTACKS WIESENTHAL OVER
PETER'S SS PAST

REFS: A) VIENNA 8690 B) VIENNA 8770

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WITH FURTHER, SHARP DENUNCIATION OF
JEWISH DOCUMENTATION CENTER CHIEF SIMON WIESENTHAL BY
CHANCELLOR KREISKY THIS WEEK OVER FREEDOM PARTY CHAIRMAN
PETER'S SS PAST, AND DEFAMATION SUIT AGAINST KREISKY
SEEMINGLY ASSURED, KREISKY-WIESENTHAL IMBROGLIO IS LIKELY
TO CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS FIRST MEETING WITH LOCAL PRESS SINCE OCTOBER
10, WHEN HE DENOUNCED JEWISH DOCUMENTATION CENTER CHIEF
SIMON WIESENTHAL AS HATEFUL, VINDICTIVE AND GUILTY OF
USING IRRESPONSIBLE METHODS CHARACTERISTIC OF POLITICAL
MAFIA IN IMPUTATING WAR CRIMES TO FREEDOM PARTY
CHEIRMAN PETER ON BASIS PETERS' SERVICE IN NOTORIOUS
SS INFANTRY UNIT, CHANCELLOR KREISKY ATTACKED
WIESENTHAL AGAIN ON OCTOBER 21 WITH INCREASED VEHEMENCE.

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HE ALSO DENOUNCED AUSTRIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT, WHICH

HAS CALLED FOR PETER'S RESIGNATION, AND WARNED PEOPLE'S PARTY LEADERS AGAINST TRYING TO EXPLOIT SITUATION IN VIEW THEIR PARTY'S OWN RECORD IN NAZI ERA.

3. KREISKY, WHO WAS BEARDED BY PRESS AFTER CABINET MEETING, ACCUSED WIESENTHAL OF "MYSTERIOUS RACISM" IN WHICH HE HAD "POSTHUMOUSLY ADOPTED NAZI IDEAS WITH SIGNS INVERTED." KREISKY REPEATED THAT IT WAS UNHEARD OF WHAT THIS "MAFIA" WAS DOING, AND NOTED AGAIN THAT WIESENTHAL HAD ANNOUNCED YEARS AGO THAT HE INTENDED TO BRING KREISKY DOWN. AS FOR WIESENTHAL-PETER CONTROVERSY ITSELF, KREISKY SAID THAT AS LONG AS THERE WAS NO PROOF TO CONTRARY, HE HAD TO BELIEVE THAT PETER HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN EXECUTIONS. IN THIS RESPECT, HE INDICATED HE BELIEVED PETER'S STATEMENT JUST AS HE BELIEVED WIESENTHAL'S STATEMENTS REGARDING HIS SURVIVAL OF NAZI ERA. MEANWHILE, KREISKY SAID HE AWAITED WIESENTHAL'S LAWSUIT AND WOULD ASK PARLIAMENT TO WAIVE HIS IMMUNITY TO FACILITATE IT.

4. KREISKY ALSO LASHED OUT AT AUSTRIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT, WHICH HAD CALLED FOR PETER'S RESIGNATION, AS "BLIND IN ONE EYE", FAILING CONSISTENTLY TO SEE WHAT OCCURS IN COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIPS. HE OBSERVED THAT EVEN SOME OF HIS OWN YOUNG PARTY FELLOWS WERE FAILING TO SHOW SAME INTEREST IN EVENTS IN COMMUNIST WORLD AS TO THOSE IN CHILE OR SPAIN. BEFORE CONCLUDING WITH WIDELY REPORTED "LEAVE ME ALONE" TO PERSISTENT REPORTERS, KREISKY NOTED THAT POLITICAL PASTS OF LEADING PEOPLE'S PARTY POLITICIANS WERE NOT BEING EXPOSED TO SAME SCRUTINY AS PETER'S, BUT THAT THERE WAS FORMER CABINET MEMBER AMONG THEM WHO WAS ALSO EX-SS MEMBER. PEOPLE IN GLASS HOUSES SHOULD NOT THROW STONES, HE WARNED.

5. WIESENTHAL RESPONDED TO LATEST KREISKY OUTBURST WITH PROMISES OF LAWSUIT, PROBABLY THIS WEEK, AND SUGGESTED KREISKY HAD PERHAPS SUFFERED TOO LITTLE IN WAR AND HIMSELF TOO MUCH. HE SAID NEW MATERIAL AGAINST PETER WOULD BE COMING SOON SINCE SEVERAL INSTITUTIONS, ALSO IN USA AND INCLUDING WEST GERMAN COURT, WERE INVOLVED.

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6. PEOPLE'S PARTY GENSEC BUSEK RESPONDED BY ACCUSING KREISKY OF TRYING TO INVOLVE OVP IN WIESENTHAL-PETER CONTROVERSY AND OF HIMSELF TAKING UNTENABLE POSITION IN VOICING SUSPICIONS WITHOUT GIVING NAMES. BUSEK SAID THAT AS MEMBER OF POST-WAR GENERATION HE BELIEVED PAST SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REST BUT THAT PAST SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE KEY DATES OF 1927, 1933, 1934 IN ADDITION TO

NAZI WARTIME PERIOD.

7. REPRESENTATIVES OF TWO VIENNA JEWISH
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE STATED CAREFULLY TO PRESS
THAT THEY WERE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH WIESENTHAL'S CENTER,
WHICH IS ASSOCIATED WITH LEAGUE OF JEWISH PERSECUTEES,
BUT THEY EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZED RIGHT AND DUTY OF JEWS
TO DEMAND PUNISHMENT OF THOSE WHO HAD COMMITTEED CRIMES
AGAINST THEM.

8. COMMENT: IT NOW APPEARS THAT POSSIBLY BOTH WIESENTHAL
AND KREISKY HAVE OVERPLAYED THEIR HANDS, ALTHOUGH
AUSTRIANS FEEL THAT KREISKY, GIVEN HIS POLITICAL
ADEPTNESS, WILL BE ULTIMATE WINNER OF CLASH. WITH
LAWSUITS PROBABLE, AND OTHER ELEMENTS BEING DRAWN INTO
FRAY, IT HOWEVER IS INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO PREDICT
END OR CONSEQUENCES OF AFFAIR
BUCHANAN

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